

India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2009, is based on the satellite imageries of the years 1994 and 2006 respectively. During this period, there is a net increase of 3.13 million hectare (mha) from 65.96 m ha to 69.09 m ha. Taking 1994 figure as base, there is an increase of 4.75% in the forest cover.

(c) and (d) An article has appeared in a journal wherein an annual decline of 1.5% to 2.7% in native forests of India has been reported. The article has estimated that tree plantation have expanded at the rate of 15400 km² per year and after subtracting plantations from total forest cover, the native forests have declined by 1.5% to 2.7% per year.

(e) and (f) The forest cover assessment published by the Forest Survey of India takes into consideration all lands more than one ha. in area with a tree canopy density of more than 10% irrespective of ownership and legal status. This includes also all plantations undertaken within and outside the government forest. Hence, Forest Survey of India report of 2009 is reliable and is not misleading regarding increase in forest cover of the country as reported erroneously in the article.

Ganga Action Plan

186. SHRI BRIJLAL KHABRI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has implemented the action plan to make Ganga pollution free;
- (b) the details of the amount received by Government in this regard from World Bank under the agreement;
- (c) the number of people or organizations who sent their memoranda to Government for making Ganga pollution free; and
- (d) the concrete steps taken by Government on these memoranda or complaints?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): (a) to (d) Ganga Action Plan (GAP) is being implemented since 1985 for undertaking pollution abatement activities in the river Ganga through implementation of schemes like interception and diversion of sewage, setting up of sewage treatment plants, low cost sanitation etc. Under this Plan, an expenditure of Rs.896.05 crore has been incurred so far and sewage treatment capacity of 1064 mld has been created.

In February 2009, the Central Government has constituted the National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA) as an empowered planning, financing, monitoring and coordinating authority with the objective to ensure effective abatement of pollution and conservation of the river Ganga by adopting a holistic river basin approach. The Authority has decided that under Mission Clean Ganga it will be ensured that by 2020 no untreated municipal sewage and industrial effluents flow into Ganga and the investments required to create the necessary treatment and sewerage infrastructure will be shared suitably between the Central and the State Governments.

A project with World Bank assistance for abatement of pollution of river Ganga at an estimated cost of Rs.7000 crore has been approved in April, 2011. The World Bank will provide financial assistance of US \$ 1 billion.

Pollution abatement schemes for the river Ganga are being implemented in the States through implementing agencies nominated by the State Governments, on a cost sharing basis between the Centre and the States. Representations/suggestions received from time to time from members of the public/organisations pertaining to conservation of Ganga are taken into consideration in the implementation of the programme based on - their merits and also forwarded to States/Implementing Agencies concerned for appropriate action.

National Green Tribunal

187. SHRI RAM CHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the National Green Tribunal (NGT) is not operational so far;
- (b) if so, the reasons for the delay; and
- (c) the time by when applicants can file their grievances on environmental issues before the NGT?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): (a) to (c) The National Green Tribunal at Delhi has become operational from July 4, 2011. The petitioners can file applications/appeals before the Tribunal at Delhi.